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THE HOUR OF PATRIOTISM.

A

Thanksgiving Discourse.

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THE HOUR OF PATRIOTISM.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE UNITED SERVICE OF THE

First, Lafayette Street, North, and Westminster
Presbyterian Churches, Buffalo,

NOVEMBER 27, 1862, THE DAY OF

THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING

IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

BY JOEL F. BINGHAM,

PASTOR OF WESTMINSTER CONGREGATION.

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TO
JESSE KETCHUM, ESQ.,
WHO HAS LONG EXEMPLIFIED IN OUR COMMUNITY
PATRIOTISM, PIETY, AND LARGE LIBERALITY.

This Discourse

KINDLY ASKED FOR PUBLICATION

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY HIS

FRIEND AND PASTOR.

DISCOURSE.

PSALM CXXII. 6.

O JERUSALEM, THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE!

DURING the sixty minutes for which I am to ask your attention, I shall employ myself in leading you to some views of THE HOUR OF PATRIOTISM, OR THE LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY IN HER MIDDLE PASSAGE.

No good man but loves his country. A virtuous patriotism is a fundamental quality in every virtuous character. It may not always be shining with a supereminent lustre over all other noble and excellent qualities, such as to throw everything else into the shade by an intense and overshadowing brightness. There is a time for all things under the sun; and it is not always that the requirements of the hour will set *this* in the foreground. There are times when other

affections and other cares will lead. When long years of quiet prosperity have lulled a nation into secure repose; when public order has ruled so long that men have begun to regard an essential breach of the peace as an impossible thing; when ages of national tranquility have brought on national slumber and men have begun to dream that disorder and war belong henceforth only to the dark and fearful past; that the angel of peace has at last received his commission from heaven to control for the future the affairs of earth; that this blessed dominion will steadily spread from shore to shore and never again be disturbed, till the heavens be no more—at such periods, the affection of which we speak will be likely to sleep, like the virgins in the parable of our Lord, while the stillness of universal repose is abroad and the call for its service of fidelity tarries. It is only by their loss that we ever estimate our blessings aright. No man can be expected properly to appreciate an unbought freedom, until he has been taught by experience its value by its cost. We all accept it, enjoy it, move about sweetly in it, as we do in the air of heaven, without a thought of its inestimable value, or of the terrors of its loss. But in

the good man's breast, the sentiment is alive though sleeping; and let the waking call be heard, let the midnight summons burst on the ear, that slumbering love will start from dreams and leap with lamp trimmed and abundant oil to respond to any summons and any sacrifice. And then, too, will the difference appear between the virtuous affection and every species of hypocrisy. If the trumpet call sound long enough and loud enough, doubtless all will be awaked. If the upheavings of old foundations roar and tremble like an earthquake beneath every man's fortunes and every man's hopes, doubtless every man will begin to take counsel of his fears. But under the pressure of the hour of action, all shams of sentiment are discovered. However closely they had before lain concealed in the general slumber, now they are compelled, like the faithless virgins of old, to show their selfishness and hypocrisy. Now the world must know that there is no oil in their lamps for the nightly march. In the hour to stand by a friend in need, to sacrifice self for noble love, to do the self-denying part of an honest and pure attachment; then, all such are forced to let it be seen that they are neither ready for the work of

patriots nor fit for the reward of heroes. Such an one no good man can be. He may have slumbered with the multitude in ungrateful and inglorious repose; when awaked to love and duty, he may have made great mistakes and smote to ruin when he ought and meant to have struck to save, but love his country every good man will, love her honestly, self-denyingly, self-forgettingly, love her to the death.

When David speaks of Jerusalem he speaks of his country. It was his home. It was the representative of his native land. It was the centre of his possessions, the embodiment of his earthly hopes as well as the type of the abode of the blest beyond the grave. Under God's own training the ancient Jews were taught to unite their patriotism and their religion more closely, perhaps, than do the best of us now. David's conception of Jerusalem was something more than the mere abstraction which attaches to that name in our minds. It was more to him than a floating fancy, however noble, pure and bright. It was more to him than a vision of faith, however laden with future and celestial splendors. It was that earthly Jerusalem whose towers and palaces that moment rose upon his

view. When he blesses and prays for Jerusalem, he blesses and prays for the capital of his country, the venerable seat of his imperial throne, the head of his countrymen's nationality, power and glory. It did, indeed, carry the destinies of the church of God. It did, indeed, enshrine the eternal hopes of earth's countless millions. Of course the pious David never for a moment forgot that. And had it not been so, doubtless that would have subtracted immensely from his pious interest in his country, his Jerusalem, as well as in everything else beneath the sun. But the true interests of church and state are always one. And any view whatever which sets these two supremest interests of man into any kind of antagonism, or even walls them apart into any essential separation of life and vigor is a disordered view and a dangerous view both to the state and to the church. David had no such view. He was a statesman as well as a saint. He saw in the integrity and prosperity of the state the vehicle which should protect and comfort the church and carry her securely and easily onward in her career of beneficence and hallowed glory. And in a cherished and loyal church he saw that which should purify and ennoble the

state and make her fit for the happy citizenship of those whose better kingdom is not of this world. He was prepared, therefore, sincerely and earnestly to pray for Jerusalem. And it was not to pray merely for the church under her symbolical name. His mind was not dealing merely with emblems of a spiritual and invisible good. He was thinking of tangible realities. He was dealing with visible facts. He prayed for the church through the state which enshrined her, for the veritable Jerusalem of Judea, for the home of his countrymen, for all the cities and valleys of that highly favored nation. He prayed for civil and political blessings and above these, indeed, yet through these for religious blessings upon the precious land of their fathers. Two reasons for his patriotism he has given in the context. O Jerusalem, my country, "*for my brethren and companions' sakes,*" for the sake of my fellow citizens, "*I will now say, Peace be within thee.*" And, "*because of the house of the Lord our God,*" for the sake of the church, "*I will seek thy good.*" O blessed home of my countrymen, he says, favored land of a fostering Providence, abode of temporal blessings unparalleled, seat of priceless privileges of grace, thou

very gate of an earthly and a heavenly paradise, "*they shall prosper that love thee!*" — This is religious, saintly, prophetic patriotism.

No one will ask me to say that the love of our country is purely a sentiment of religion. This, like every other native impulse, will be ennobled and purified by true religion, but it is indeed one of the sweet charities of our common nature. Among people of every age and every land and every shade of moral sentiment, the name of patriot has been always and everywhere a beloved, venerable, sacred name. Wherever any tender affections exist, wherever the meaning of mother, brother, friend is felt and cherished—widely as this—you will never fail to find also that the word fellow-countrymen carries a treasured sweetness. Commonly, it is true, the sentiment works so quietly as to be little noticed and seldom thought of. And so, too, under the pressure of cares and the hurry of engagements, how many of us sometimes for the hour forget even that we have wives and children?—But there are two occasions when this attachment ought to make itself felt, and will make itself felt in every breast which is not hopelessly sunk in cowardice, or treachery.

One of these times comes over us, when we find ourselves far away from our home, strangers in a foreign land. Then the images of departed joys, associations gone, privileges debarred, rise vivid in our memory and rule unbidden the emotions of our breast. When we move in the crowd of aliens that know us not, know not the language our mother taught us, know little of and care nothing for the land we love; then our instinctive affections move toward that distant country which we call our own, where we are known and loved and where is stored our earthly all; then the very sounds of her language are music, the faces of fellow-countrymen like the faces of brothers. Upon this sensitive instinct of human nature despots have built the punishment of exile. It has always served their purpose well in straining and wrenching the tenderest strings of the patriot's heart. It works like an invisible rack of torture, and works on the deepest, purest, noblest longings of the soul. I envy not, I love not the man who could endure exile without pain. I admire not the man who can travel in foreign parts, however pleasantly, without a twinge of this same pain. He may see abroad much that is more splendid than

anything which his country can boast, much that is every way worthy and excellent, but he cannot find there the land that bore him, that has so gently yet securely sheltered his life and fostered his fortunes and now waits to afford him a quiet grave, or perhaps an honored sepulchre, by the side of kindred dust, when he is ready to be gathered to his fathers. I have no respect for the traveler who will not love his country the more, after his wanderings and his return.

The other supreme occasion for conscious patriotism is a time like that which is now going over us — the time of national peril. A friend indeed is a friend in need. The day of danger is the day of patriots. The hour of fear and suffering is the reigning hour of affection. Adversity is the genuine spur of love. As the darkness deepens, that flame will burn hotter in every honest and filial bosom. The shock of alarm will startle all the energies of affection and gather them into conscious feeling and ready effort. It is in vain to talk of affection that is not felt and seen in the day of trial. Of what material must that man be composed who could view with indifference the mortal agonies of the country

that gave him birth? Of what material must that man be composed who could look calmly on the coming wreck of those gentle laws which, like a mother seeking only his interest, have guarded his happiness and nourished his fortune from the first hour of his life? What must he be made of who without tears of anguish and anger could see those institutions which his fathers reared, whose beautiful fabric was the object of his boyish dreams, the joy and glory of his maturer years, not as he fondly hoped likely to go down intact and untarnished an increasing legacy to the latest child that should bear his name, but on the contrary, unless rescued by prodigious and fortunate exertions, likely to be trampled in the dust by exasperated enemies, or malicious conspirators! When that object of our love is plainly in jeopardy; when those foundations of our trust which we supposed to be firm as adamant and abiding as the everlasting hills are obviously crumbling beneath us and an abyss that none can fathom is opening below; then honest affection must take the alarm; then the sincere heart will need no schooling of logic and wait for no command of irrefragible authority. It will be a joy, it will be a necessity to speak

and to strike for that dear and glorious land. And what this heaven-born instinct, at such a time, is the first to discover and appreciate all else within us that is righteous and noble and true justifies and supports. Reason, duty, religion, rally round this native sentiment and direct and sanction her work. Then, instinct and principle, for once, are one.

It is a good reason, then, why we are right to love and fear for our country, that it is our home. We have a right to hold dear the untold interests her safety involves to our prosperity and comfort. This space of earth, this soil we tread, these skies and breezes, these organizations of government, of learning, of religion, are our own. They are ours to control, to perfect and to profit by. They are ours to be robbed of, to lose, to suffer by and win an immortality of shame. Our earthly all is at stake. Nothing is so dear, nothing is so precious, but it is linked with this supreme risk. Stripped of this, truly there is nothing left. To put the name of selfishness upon our partiality for the country in whose safety all our interests are merged is to subliminate morality even above the standard of the Bible. It is the dictate of religion as well as of

natural impulse and common sense to love that which was made on purpose for our love, to keep and enjoy that which was provided for our enjoyment and welfare. And to neglect to do this is not only weakness and folly, but guilt and shame. Whoever is untaught, or unwilling to expend, to labor, to sacrifice for his home is too insignificant, or unworthy to possess a home.

We love our country, too, most appropriately for her peculiar and precious memories. This land is a legacy from fathers who bought it with labor and blood. It was redeemed, acre by acre, from the wilderness of ages. It was wrested first from barbarism, next from tyranny, and then bequeathed to us, a noble, pure plateau for human liberty and human happiness. No stain of ancient despotism taints this soil. As it was found, separated by God's great waters from the iron hand of wrong, so it has been left, clean from the clutches of irresponsible power. The dire spell of king-craft was never woven over these wild, free, divine shores. No armies of insatiate conquerors ever thundered across these virgin plains. The oppressive maxims of old political systems, the prodigious inequalities of fortune which have divided the inhabitants of the other

continent into princes and beggars, the hoary prejudices of rank and caste—this long catalogue of governmental vices and human grievances and woes, these unsophisticated hills and valleys have never been called to learn. Our land is the mysterious sunset region of ancient wonder. We have come into actual possession of the fabled “western isles of the blest.” Shut away, and kept in store, as it were, under God’s own padlock, it was given at last by a discerning Providence into the charge of our faithful pilgrim sires.

Some years ago, an English traveler desired to examine the site of ancient Troy and the neighboring celebrities of Homer’s *Iliad*. At Athens he chartered a bark, and took on board a Greek pilot. Their course was nearly the same with that which is represented in Homer as the route of the allied fleets of Greece on their way to avenge the rape of Helen, thirty centuries before. The white cliffs of Tenedos at length heave in sight. They coast along its southern margin, and then steer up between the island and the Mysian shore. The pilot has been strangely silent for some time and seems excited. By his orders they prepare to cast anchor. At

last he gives the word, "Let go! 't was here they anchored our fleet." "What fleet?" asked the astonished gentleman. "What fleet!" retorted the indignant pilot, "Our allied fleet, the fleet of Greece at the siege of Troy." The traveler tells us that he was electrified. The memories of antiquity flashed with overwhelming glory upon his mind. He had forgotten that the poor pilot was of blood which was gentle and heroic when Britain was inhabited by cannibals—which was at the zenith of glory when history opens her earliest intelligible page. Who of us does not sympathize with the fine sensibility of that poor Greek? Who of us does not admire his claim of heirship, and love him for his fond pride over those waters and coasts gilded so long, long ago, with the precious memories of his fathers?

But what are the memories of a legendary fleet at Troy, in comparison with the historic glories of *our* Mayflower riding at anchor on the wintry New England coast? What are the half-fabled characters of Agamemnon Ulysses and the rest, in the darkness of three thousand years ago, in comparison with the true and venerable name of *our* just departed Washington? What are all the most glorious memories of a Pagan

antiquity; what are all the struggles and masteries of brute, selfish force; when compared with the struggles of Christian heroism; when compared with the masteries of self-denying principle—the pure, incorruptible, moral foundations upon which, as the work of *our* fathers, we stand to-day?

O Pilgrim Fathers! how shall we measure your worth?—how shall we estimate your rightful honor? You were moral giants in a hard and stormy age. You were incorruptible founders of institutions that brighten the history of man. I can fancy that the Genius of Liberty will sit evermore musing at the head of your graves. I can almost imagine that the final flames of doom, when commissioned to consume a corrupt and incorrigible world, will pause a moment in reverence before your immortal dust. Fortunate land that holds in her bosom the relics of such men! Fortunate nation that owns as citizens the sons in whose veins still flows this nobler than regal blood! Read history through, till her whole story is done, and where will you find the like? Are we to be blamed for loving with the warmest, the wildest affection a home of such memories? Are we to be blamed for a

jealous solicitude over every blot on her fair name, over every impediment to her growing greatness and splendor?

We love our country, also, and ought to love her, for her genial and gentle institutions. For we have here no government whose strength and prosperity is one thing, and the comfort and prosperity of the people another. We have here no estate of noble beggars pensioned on the public purse. We have here no class who are born to live in idleness through all their generations on the industry of others. With us, merit is nobility, and industry and skill are wealth. With us, none are born only for office and its emoluments, and none only for subjection and its burdens. This is the genius, at least, of our government. And this, I think, throughout the section in which we live, is its practical working. If in another section of our land it is different; if there is there a privileged aristocracy; if there is there a birth to office and idleness, and a birth to disfranchisement and slavery; then, though it be within our body politic, it is not of us. It is an element foreign to all our social foundations. It is a disorganizing, destructive element to such institutions as ours. It has damaged us much

already, it may yet damage^{us} us vastly more. And if it be true that it has made a kind of congenital ulcer, too deep and organic to be cut out clean with safety to our national life, then, surely, we shall not hate it the less for that. But we cannot on this account love our precious country the less. Rather, like a dear friend in infirmity, we shall love her the more tenderly, for our pity over her loathsome blemish. We shall long and labor for the day when the wicked and dangerous thing shall be sloughed off into the waters of the southern gulf, to be seen by American eyes no more.

There is another cord of endearment which binds us as Americans with a new attachment to this cherished land—it is the hope of far brighter and better things yet to be. When a child of uncommon promise is given to our arms, and daily unfolds into the dawn of qualities which foretell a rare career of honor and usefulness, we all know how it binds parental hearts every day closer and closer to that child. The bright consummation which the heart craves, the suspense of expectation over the uncertain future, the manifest advance from interval to interval toward the idolized result—all serve to strengthen

and intensify our affection. We begin to love already the fancied ideal of our hope, and all the tenderness of solicitude is engendered besides over the chances and perils through which the cherished object must pass to arrive at the posture where it should be. So we realize, or ought to realize, that that one thing which gives our country her chief pre-eminence among the nations, is still a principle on probation. Our institutions are still an experiment. They may succeed, and they may fail. The world has never yet seen that which can fairly be set up as a parallel. In the democracy of ancient Athens, in the so-called republic of Rome, in the short and sanguinary attempts of modern France, in the little confederation of Switzerland, — all that would be thought of in comparison with us, — there are differences so essential as quite to neutralize the force of any inferences from such comparisons. The democracy of Athens was an unrestrained ocean of popular power, perpetually surging hither and thither under storms of passion, or the breath of oratory. The famed freedom of the Roman state was a narrow, selfish platform, built on the slavery of the world. The republic of France was essentially a transient,

re-actionary impulse, and finally married to a military despotism. The little confederation of the Swiss, so small and isolated, has not been subjected to all the strains which fall on the great active nations of the world. Of the three great examples, then, excepting the Swiss, the religion of the two first was a worn out Paganism; of the third, bald infidelity. But of a great, free, Christian nation, founded on liberty, equality, law and the Bible, open to the whole brotherhood of mankind, and marching on a champion of human rights for all the world and for all the ages — of this we have no parallel on which either to predict success, or to pre-*sa*ge a failure. We have, however, undoubtedly, rational ground for the strongest hope. We have, undoubtedly, a broad foundation for the most inspiring anticipations of coming years. All we seem to need is to be allowed in safety to go on our way. All we need is a continued growth in greatness like the past, and a growth in virtue to equal it. True, it doth not yet appear what we, as a nation, *shall* be, but it is sure that it *may* be such as the world has not yet dreamed of. It *may* be such a home of liberty, such a scene of peaceful order and contented

industry, where the sword of authority never need be drawn from the scabbard, such a theatre of plenty and material prosperity and splendor, such a land of comfort and greatness, such a land of right and virtue and religion as would well answer to the figure of millennial glory and the reign of the Redeemer of men upon earth. We know it is possible, we hope it will be true. And no honest heart need be told how this fond hope enhances our attachment to this "promised land" of mankind.

But now we must not forget that these institutions which we love are the most delicate and precarious of all things beneath the sun. We delight in them, because they are the very transcript and expression of our desires and opinions. We glory in them, because they are founded on the will of the people. But all men know that there is not in the whole universe a more unstable thing than the will of the populace. There is nothing in the whole universe more capable of sudden, unexpected and complete revulsions in its course than the breath of the multitude. To-day a measure, or a man may be riding on the topmost wave of popular favor, and be carried forward with swift and irresistible force. Tomor-

row this impulse may be in swift recoil and the object of yesterday's huzzahs, left stranded by the ebbing tide, may be the object of equally earnest hatred and curses. It were idle to deny, and it were foolish to blind our eyes to the fact, that there are not, and perhaps it were impossible in consistency with the genius of our institutions to construct, any safe and insuperable barriers which should prevent such a rush of popular sentiment to one extreme, or the other, as may plunge us almost in a day into remediless national perdition. This catastrophe, which history has already written out of others, is plainly possible, too, of ourselves. However unwelcome and startling such a thought may be, there is certainly no wisdom in deceiving ourselves on a point of such moment, or in refusing to look squarely into the face of facts which we cannot alter.

When we consider, then, how slight and fragile is the machinery of our gentle government, by the very necessity of its nature: when we reflect how different are its pliant and elastic foundations from the invincible, unyielding, iron foundations on which, nevertheless, the great monarchies have often been shaken almost to a fall, and without which no government has yet proved

itself able to outride the storms of ages: when we think of the wild aspiration for office and power which seems to grow with the growth of the nation; when we think of the general supremacy of self-seeking, and the easy and tempting opportunities for gathering spoils at the expense of truth and justice and the interests of the state; when we see the rapid and extreme changes in the rotation of elections: when we remember the obscurity and the repulsive features of many needful measures which are in reality too complicated in their bearings and too profound ever to be sufficiently understood by a majority of voters, to be intelligently and wisely judged of; when we remember how strong is the desire of popularity in elective officers of state; when we observe how little respect and fear of authority has come to dwell in the minds of the people, taught to regard themselves as the ever supreme fountain of authority: when we see liberty seeming to be training up a spirit of lawlessness; when we see the mad impatience for desired results, the conflicting interests of individuals and of localities: when we look into the halls of legislation, and compute how few of those senators and representatives constantly vote by their

judgment and conscience for the best public good, and how often and how many vote by a calculation merely upon the highest bribe and for the greatest individual profit: and when we remember at this very hour our present upheaved and crumbling condition, the rage of the hurricane which as yet shows no symptom of abatement, if it be not every hour blowing with greater and greater fury: — who, but an idiot, or a traitor, can rest unconcerned for the sensitive and frail machinery of our beloved institutions? Who can fail to see that there is no power, but that which rolls the orbs in heaven, which can ensure the steadiness and security of so many and so mighty loosely chained forces? Who can fail to see that ours is no government, and that this is no hour in her history under which a good citizen may sleep away his years in indolence and security? Who can fail to see that every iota of intelligence, of influence, of conscientious integrity which is possessed by any citizen is demanded of him by the call of patriotism to be consecrated to the salvation and perpetuity of this precious republic, this supreme hope for the liberty and happiness of mankind?

I think I can point out in a few closing words

three, or four transcendent duties which every citizen owes to this land, and which every honest and intelligent lover of his country will rejoice steadily to pay with a view to her momentary welfare. For none of us, I hope, expect to be preserved and sustained by miraculous interpositions of Heaven. At the final destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus and his Roman army, the infatuated people believed to the last hour that God would yet interpose and by some unexpected aid deliver their heaven-beloved nation from utter overthrow. But they were miserably mistaken; and hundreds of thousands who might have escaped hugged their empty delusion, till they perished by the sword, or the flames. Something like this has happened to others, before their day and since. Every nation, I believe, since the world began, has regarded itself as in some way of more consequence in the eye of Providence, than any other. But of this we may be sure, whatever the Hand of God in the matter, we shall be shockingly disappointed, if we trust our perpetuity and welfare as a nation to anything which fails to make the people, and each of them, the saviours and protectors of themselves.

Every citizen's first great duty of patriotism, then, is never to despair of his country's safety and welfare. Despair is not the temper of a patriot, nor is it any means of his country's good. Whatever be the straits and the danger, no good citizen will for a moment believe that his country is going down in disgrace and ruin. Every citizen must uphold her not only by an unconquerable arm, but by unconquerable hopes. There is a force in this whole-hearted confidence which cannot be over-estimated. We talk of the moral support of foreigners, of the countenance and moral aid of other nations; but all that the whole outside world can do in this way is not once to be compared with the stability and invincible strength which comes, and can come, only from the unwavering confidence of a fond, reliant community at home. In fact, the opinion of the foreigner is of little practical value in any way, except as it is wont to operate on this confidence of our own citizens here. But it is pre-eminently in the hearts and the hopes of the people that the strength of our government lies. While this fountain of life is sound and healthy and buoyant, her vigor will be like that of Sampson in the glory of his unshorn locks. The com-

mon shackles and impediments upon national development she will burst through and brush away like withs of tow, because the secret of her great strength is untouched, and she cannot be bound by human hand. But once let the undaunted affection, the confident hope of her citizens be undermined; let the morbid spirit of despair creep over the body politic, like the chill of some noisome ague; lo, almost in an hour, the strength of a giant will have faded into helpless weakness. The secret of power has been reached. Sampson shorn is led away to shame and slavery. It is a prime duty, then, of every favored subject of our beloved popular government, to guard and foster this undying confidence in his own breast, and to guard and foster it in the bosom of every fellow-citizen. Words of despondency must not be allowed to fly about from lip to lip on their errand of mischief. Words of good cheer must dwell on our tongues, thoughts of hope and confidence must brighten our faces, and deeds of courage and real self-denial must make our lives noble and heroic, or we are unfit for our place and our day.

The next precept proposes to restrain a great

vice of our times, and especially a peculiar vice of our American temper and habits. It is a grand old precept of the Bible, and was originally uttered for the spiritual guidance of the faithful Christian, but it is equally appropriate and vastly needed to control the visible, present life of every citizen. It is God's conservatism. It is to let the great stable virtue "*have her perfect work.*" And that work will not be indolence, nor indifference, nor neglect. It will not shut out attention and interest and anxiety, but it will include forbearance and caution and sometimes a wise endurance. It will not be blind nor insensible, it will see and feel, but it will bear and wait. I shall not dispute the national idea, if it be such, that fifteen minutes is time enough for an American to consume on his dinner, or fifteen seconds time enough for him to deliberate and decide upon the most gigantic bargain in commerce. But American citizens must learn that their quarter of a minute, or quarter of an hour is not the precise amount of time which God may choose to take in working out, even through them, the great moral and civil ameliorations of man. American citizens must learn that even their own idolized and wonderful na-

tion is not to run the race of national greatness so swift and so sure as completely to outstrip every assault of human errors and human guilt and completely to escape every shock of disaster and loss. They must learn that swiftmess alone is not enough for anything, but the meteor which goes out in darkness at the very moment it has attained the zenith. They must learn to wait without discontent, to labor steadily without impatience, while the slow results of patriotic efforts gradually shape themselves aright and consolidate and mature. They must learn to work with unfailing patience for years and generations upon this difficult and stupendous fabric which we hope is now rearing to go down, an honor to our posterity and a blessing to mankind, and whose brightness, we hope, will not be dimmed, till its glories are lost in the splendors of the millennial day. This will be a prodigious, amazing achievement; and like every other great human enterprise, must advance with varied and very uncertain progress. Mistakes, follies and treacheries are to be expected. Hitches will occur in all human machinery. The heart of the patriot will often be stung almost beyond endurance. Yet, in the grand comparison, these drawbacks

are but a little thing in so great a march of light, civilization and liberty onward. They must be endured, and may be comfortably endured, if we will see in them the finger of Providence, as well as the footprints of human imperfection which must be expected to attend even on the march of human amelioration and real advancement.—As to the yet unsolved and terrible question of slavery, the sorest push, no doubt, on the patience of many a noble heart. It is clearly possible that the wheels of the Divine chariot are retarded in mercy. The tender and devoted Redeemer, when summoned once to the sick-bed of a friend, lingered four days in slow preparations for the journey, and when at last told of his death, said He was glad He had not come sooner, because now God would be glorified in a more stupendous miracle. And if it be God's will that an additional year, or two, or more, of peril and suffering shall work out for us a more complete and glorious deliverance, what sincere patriot cannot afford to be patient? If God choose to allow the serpent of rebellion to live, despite all our efforts, till it has eaten up the serpent of slavery for us, and then dying clears our land of both serpents at once, what good man

will not feel paid for the time of waiting? Some of us, all of us, may be too much in a hurry. "He that believeth," says the Bible, "will not make haste."

One great duty more. It is the genius of republics to affect simplicity. It is one of the many charms of our American institutions that public power here can safely lay aside the imposing paraphernalia of monarchies. Any officer among us can securely and efficiently execute his trust in the ordinary garb of a citizen. Almost while I speak, the Supreme Judiciary of the United States has yielded to the simplicity of republican ideas and cast away the last imposing trapping of old traditional stateliness. That venerable judicial vesture, that long black robe and snowy bands, that awful rag of old despotic power has been put off, to be put on in America no more. Scarce a trace, in civil life, of these relics of the dark and barbarous ages any longer exists among us. It is grand to think that the American people can recognize and obey the reality of power without its coarse, barbaric appendages. That a great people should firmly and thoroughly govern themselves is the loftiest political thought that ever entered the mind of

man. It is an idea which the statesmen of the old world, for the most part, have no faith in whatever, and which they laugh at, as like a children's school without a master. And, undoubtedly, its success demands a simplicity of heart as well as of manners, and a universal loyalty of deportment which no people as yet has conclusively proved itself equal to. The grand necessity and the grand difficulty is to secure for the pure abstraction of authority and justice the love and the respect of the great heart of the community. When a fellow-citizen, at the call of the sacred ballot, takes up the reins of government in any department, then must his countrymen look at him, not as an equal to criticize, censure and condemn at will, but as a necessary incarnation of sacred law and inviolable command. Personal qualities, individual likes and dislikes, when once the choice is over, must all be lost sight of, in recognizing the called officer of the common weal. Whatever may be the imperfections of the man, the authority which he bears is pure and perfect and sacred. The poor form of clay, each with his own peculiarities and infirmities, soon gives place to a different yet differently imperfect successor, but the sacred authority

changes not and dies not. This remains evermore the same, like God above. This hallowed, benign, omnipotent idea must never be trifled with. This invisible angel of authority cannot with impunity be slighted. This we must every moment obey, defend and uphold with all our might. This faithfully obeyed, defended and upheld will stand by us, as the guardian angel of our liberties and prosperity, till time shall end. It needs no robes, or imposing state. The greatest simplicity is doubtless the best taste for American citizens, in both public and private life. It is, certainly, the most in unison with the genius of our simple institutions. But if public simplicity is degraded into emptiness and brutality; if the dignity of office is lost sight of, in the commonness of the man; if the immediate accountability of elective officers cripple, or debase the supremacy of government itself; if neglect of the material trappings of authority means failure of respect and fidelity to the authorized power; if absence of cringing servility means lack of love and loyalty to the actual ruling arm;—then woe worth the day to my country;—then give me such security as despotism can offer, rather than a grinding to powder under the endless roll of

radical revolutions. Which may God forbid, and the faithful, wise, self-sacrificing support of my countrymen given cheerfully and always to those fellow-citizens who hold for the time the high offices of authority and trust in the land happily and forever avert!

Custom requires of me one word more. At the close of these annual services, we make an annual offering to these orphan children. They lean on our charities for childhood's bread and their first start in life. Many times, it may be, during the year, some of us have responded to this sweet call. If so it has done us good; and we have by this route sent so much forward to Heaven which will be paid to us again in solid, incorruptible treasure on our arrival there. But whether it be so, or whether we have lacked opportunity before, what so fit climax to this hour, when we sit down to remember how much we have received and how able we are and how bound we are to lend back to the Lord! And what act so fitting for the wise citizen and patriot, as thus to lend a helping hand to forestall the dens of infamy, rob the almshouse and beggar the penitentiary? For the soiled and ragged little things upon our streets to-day will shape

the destiny of our country and our children
tomorrow.



HYMN.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

[Sung in conclusion.]

THE breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches tossed;

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes
They, the true hearted, came;
Not with roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear;—
They shook the depths of the desert gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea!
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free.

The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roared—
This was their welcome home.

What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod!
They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.

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